

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING SCOTLAND ACT 1997

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURES) (SCOTLAND)
RULES 1997 AS AMENDED



**OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR GOLF COURSE AND RESORT
DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT MENIE HOUSE, BALMEDIE, ABERDEEN**

GEOMORPHOLOGY

REBUTTAL PRECOGNITION OF

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Evidence on behalf of Scottish Natural Heritage

(DPEA REFERENCE: CNS/ABS/001)

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this statement is to rebut certain specific assertions of identified witnesses and productions in respect of geomorphology in the absence of my principal precognition explicitly dealing with such matters.

Precognition of Professor W Ritchie for TIGLS on Geomorphology

2. In Prof. Ritchie's precognition at section 3.3 (i) he identifies that the coastal dune and beach / dune interface will not be utilised in any way by the development. It is however identified in T2 and T4 that holes 3 and 14 require works which are likely to have impact on the coastal dune and beach processes. In addition, the assertion that any works within and adjacent to the coastal dune and beach / dune interface, that might be required in the future will be "soft" can not be assured.
3. Section 3.3 (ii) considers that the blow out gap shows "every sign of permanence", however in my evidence, the narrowing and partial stabilisation of the current blowout gap is an expected part of the long-standing northward migration of processes associated with the sand sheet, with the axis of activity continuing to progressively move north, (SNH 11, SNH 53). The sand feed is not "closing down and turning off" because sand continues to be supplied via the blowout gap as well as by erosion of the high dunes immediately to the north of the current blowout. The present active deflation of these dunes forms the locus of present and future instability and the likely precursor to new blowout development, in repetition of a cyclic process that has endured since historical aerial photography has been available.
4. In section 3.3 (iv), it is our contention that the geomorphological interests also include the area to the south of the Menie sand sheet, and that it is still changing in terms of hydrology and vegetation, albeit at a less rapid rate and, apart from the Blairton / Balmedie sand sheet, does not involve large areas of bare sand. However, the bare sand sheet at Blairton / Balmedie is also to be the subject of proposed stabilisation to accommodate 2 holes in the current layout. Further, if the proposed area for "future golf" (i.e. the second golf course extends south to the Balmedie Country Park boundary) goes ahead on part of the sand sheet, then substantial parts of the bare sand of this area will also require to be stabilised.
5. With regard to the golf course layout and the recent design iteration, there remain adverse impacts due to the stabilisation of the mobile sand sheet areas, the general topographic "*smoothing*" and the amount of cut and fill required to other dune areas and the infill and topographic alteration of many dune slacks. It should also be noted that SNH has not provided general agreement on the specific locations of greens, fairways and tees (section 3.3(v)). We have seen the various design iterations, however our objection in principle remains that development should be relocated away from both the sand sheet and the dunes, in order to avoid the substantial adverse impacts identified by the applicants in the ES and the revised hole by hole analysis (T4).

6. The contention of SNH is that the sand dune environment of North Menie is important due to the dynamic interplay of process and landform. The creation of the golf course(s) involves the creation of artificial landforms with substantial stabilisation and cut and fill, yet the ES does not take into account that the proposed mitigation replicates neither the current geomorphological interests as an entire assemblage, nor the individual dynamic geomorphological components which presently exist. If the processes are arrested then the ecological interests that depend on these dynamic processes are arrested also. Further consideration of the impacts on the ecological interests and the proposed mitigation is provided by SNH in other rebuttal statements.